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the financial interests in the world would throttle war with the tightening of the purse strings. Society has awakened from that dream to find that the nations have at their command unlimited millions, not alone for defense, but also for attack. Many staked their hopes upon the belief that Socialism at least would prevent recourse to arms. The moral timidity of Socialism when its supreme test came in this present European war will not be overlooked by historians. The churches too have been weighed in the balances and have been found wanting. Some have bowed before the storm and have thus thought to maintain their insecure place in society. Others have railed against the tempest and hurled anathemas in the name of Christ. Again others have been content to repeat to unheeding

ears the gospel of love and brotherhood and good will.

Yet here is Christianity's opportunity. War is the perversion of the instinct for struggle and conflict. That instinct may be turned into legitimate channels. Christianity can do this by offering a field of conflict greater than any that has been recorded on the red page of history. It is the field of spiritual warfare. Engaged upon it men will find a higher and more strenuous use for what martial qualities they may possess than in any physical contest with one another. To Christ's mind there was no uncertainty about the reality of this battlefield. He fought upon it valiantly. He died the death of a soldier. He made the cross the badge of courage. He created a religion of valor.

ACCREDITED BIBLE-STUDY

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In the days before the Religious Education Association had its birth, earnest teachers of the Bible frequently found their modest adventures in the line of progress practically blocked by prejudice and ultra-conservatism.

At one time, while I was teaching in a small Sunday school of the Middle West, I sought better accommodations for my class of intermediates in a storeroom at one side of the pulpit. The rubbish was first removed and the room furnished

with table, chairs, charts, and an improvised blackboard. Bibles were substituted for quarterlies, and frequent midweek sessions were held at my own home. Just as the pupils had begun to develop a lively interest in the heroes of the Bible and to reproduce, both orally and in writing, thrilling stories from their lives, a protest arose from a few parents and church officials to the effect that I was working the class too hard. Recalling the crowded curriculum

in the seventh and eighth grades of the average public school I yielded as gracefully as possible. Nevertheless I still felt persuaded that the pupils had shown more definite symptoms of interest than of overwork. The same parents would, I knew, strenuously insist that Tommy should master each lesson in the pile of school books he brought home every night. In a vague, helpless way I began to question the consistency of an educational system that crowds out the Bible—that sees pedagogical possibilities in Napoleon and none in Nehemiah. Leaving the town permanently soon afterward, I metaphorically “shook the dust off my feet” and recalled Galileo’s famous retort, “It does move, for all that.”

Today, as I examine a score of well-written notebooks and themes on the Hebrew prophets, I am doubly conscious that the world has moved forward, and I am deeply grateful for a part in the execution of the plan so carefully laid by courageous and farseeing pioneers. For these notebooks were prepared by one group of students from the State Teachers’ College of Colorado who receive full credit in their course for satisfactory work done in Greeley’s Bible schools. This group is merely a typical one, the quality of work being no higher than that done by the various other groups during the four years’ history of the plan.

Originating in the fertile brain of Rev. D. D. Forward, then pastor of a church in Greeley, it was elaborated through the combined action of the Young Women’s Christian Association, the college faculty, and the Weld County Ministerial Association. Two hundred

and seventy students are, at present, pursuing the same course in nine different church schools, the basis of division being solely the students’ own denominational preference. The number and length of the sessions, the notes and themes for each term, and the scholastic attainments of the teacher are the only questions over which the college maintains jurisdiction. Each class is absolutely free to follow any doctrinal bent it may choose in the presentation of the subject. The Catholic church has, each year, conducted a large and enthusiastic class and the Unitarians have recently joined the movement.

Beginning, therefore, “at Jerusalem,” the plan of accredited Bible-study is manifestly something more than an abortive attempt to inject a little religion into a single public educational institution. Present indications suggest its ultimate spread to the uttermost parts of the land.

Not only has the scheme proved a success in institutions of higher learning, but it is also beginning to penetrate the entire educational system of the state. Enthusiastic specialists in religious education have perfected plans which have been adopted by the Colorado Teachers’ Association whereby systematic Bible-study may be elected and be given credit throughout the entire high-school course. The church schools are required to furnish teachers possessing the degree of Bachelor of Arts or its equivalent. In this respect it differs fundamentally from the North Dakota plan, which places far less emphasis on the pedagogical factor. During the present school year, several school boards and progressive Sunday schools are co-

operating in the organization of such high-school classes. In Denver, the cause has received the hearty support of Catholic priests, Jewish rabbis, and professors in a Methodist university. The North Central High School Association proposes to discuss the principle with a view to adoption at its next session, to be held in Chicago in March.

Is not, then, this principle of accredited Bible-study worthy of consideration as a possible way out of the difficulty which religious educators have long felt? It seems to be the only course between the Scylla of an established state church and the Charybdis of a bitter sectarianism. It fulfils alike the demands of freedom and fraternity, checks extreme proselyting tendencies, and magnifies loyalty to individual convictions. All classes being conducted within the limits of church property and by teachers who receive not a cent of public money, there is absolutely no ground for legal complaint. Neither is denominational jealousy provoked, since all pupils of all creeds receive equal credit for actual work done.

But whether he receives credit or not each pupil must receive something else of far greater value—an increased respect for the Bible as related to his own life. The fact that it is placed on the curriculum side by side with mathematics and history impresses him unconsciously with the fact that religion is a vital part of his education and not something to be turned over to the goody-goodies. Knowing that his chums, in their respective church homes, are studying the same subject as he, the lad will find a new interest in the weekly gap between

Friday and Monday. This involves some co-operation on the part of the home, which is, I am sorry to say, often a variable or unknown quantity. No more difficult and delicate task confronts the educators of today than the conquest of parental indifference. This is notably true in the field of religion. Too many parents seem to imagine that a knowledge of the Bible can be absorbed magically by the presence of one in the house or by carrying it occasionally to church. I have often listened aghast at the glib unconcern with which a Christian mother would offer trivial excuses for her daughter's absence from a Sunday-school session. During the process of introducing a graded-lesson system in the Junior department of one Sunday school I tried the experiment of allowing the pupils to complete the written work at home, a task which could easily be done in a half-hour each week. This plan seemed to please them, but the lessons were so frequently lost that I finally set out on a tour of investigation. I soon learned the tragic fate of the unhappy leaflets and how few of them actually survived the exigencies of a spring housecleaning campaign. The mothers were not unkind. One obligingly erased a pumpkin pie recipe that adorned the back of an exercise on the apostles.

Finding such conditions prevailing in comfortable, nominally Christian homes, I indulged a few pessimistic reflections concerning the probable state of things in less favorable surroundings. I welcome, therefore, any remedy that promises to improve these conditions. Those parents were undoubtedly interested in the education of their children. All

excuses and apologies echoed the one plea that they were so busy with their studies. It was apparent that the idea of educational value in Bible-study had no place in the parental mind. Perhaps I should record one notable exception, when a country mother postponed a music lesson in order that her daughter might drive five miles to attend a special session of the Sunday-school class!

The problem as I see it is, briefly stated, to convince the average parent that the Sunday morning session is not merely an optional dress parade, but just as important as the one on Monday—that religion is to be taught, not caught like measles. The compulsory attendance and formal report cards of the public-school system have inspired a certain amount of awe in the adult mind. When, therefore, the “powers that be” in that system shall have decreed that Tommy receive due credit for his Bible lessons, Tommy’s father and mother will begin to grow interested and not worry so much lest he work too hard over those lessons. Possibly they will discover many hitherto unnoticed opportunities whereby the home may effectively co-operate with the church and the school in the complete education of the child; for no education can be complete that is not religious in the broadest sense of the term.

No one of these three agencies can accomplish this result alone. If the church volunteers to take over a definite teaching function, the home and the school have a right to demand that it be faithfully discharged. In short, the church must see to it that its Bible school is a real school of religion and not a mere travesty of the name.

This will involve a radical change in former methods of housing and financing the Sunday school—not a new idea, by any means.

Churches of all creeds are waking up to the fact that they cannot hold their youth unless they provide adequate quarters for them. Some are even proposing to “pull down their barns and build greater,” less-barnlike, structures. Modern standards of Sunday-school architecture require that all classes be provided with separate rooms for use when occasion demands. Whoever has taught or observed a class in the ancient, all-in-one-room school will acknowledge that every teaching period furnishes such an occasion whose urgent demands include, not only pleasant, comfortable rooms, but also as complete an equipment as the public school finds necessary to its successful operation. Considering the financial perplexities of the average church, one is tempted to inquire with Nicodemus, “How can these things be?” It is true here, as always, that “where there’s a will, there’s a way.” The church that *wills* to do it generally does provide a pipe-organ and choir, stained glass windows and soft carpets. The state does not expect the public-school pupil to provide his own equipment with penny collections. Many churches are solving the problem by the use of a budget system which allows them to make adequate appropriations for the support of the Sunday school. In this system every child is taught to make his offering or pledge directly to the church, thus gaining a rational conception of his own relation to that body of which the Sunday school is a function.

Not only in its plant and its policy, but also in its program, the church of the past has tacitly acknowledged its paramount interest in adult life. In many cases the Sunday school has been forced to fight frequent encroachments on its one hour of allotted time. If it followed the regular morning service, a special business meeting or a long-winded speaker would subtract ten or more precious minutes, and the superintendent, sighting ahead the Gibraltar of a Sunday dinner, would consult his watch and hurriedly announce, "We will now have twenty minutes for the study of the lesson." The sessions of the school which preceded the church service were usually squeezed between the upper and nether millstones of a late breakfast and an irate orchestra and choir. On the whole, it did not seem surprising that boys and girls soon dropped out of a school whose weekly standing was so unstable—which even the church seemed to consider so much in the way. Conditions are rapidly improving, however. One church in particular, which had been guilty of some of the above-mentioned sins against its Sunday school, is now experimenting with the modern combination service. This is a welcome compromise, but there are seers who will not be satisfied with half a loaf. They are looking for and working for the day of a continuous, educational morning session of a real Bible school, the inspirational or evangelistic service filling the evening (and the churches likewise).

The pastor, being thus set free from the traditional bondage of two sermons a week, would be able to put more genuine soul power into the evening service and at the same time to render

greater assistance in the educational program. This ideal Bible school can never be tedious. Being under expert management, it will include study, devotional and expressional activities, all thoroughly correlated. The teacher will be encouraged and stimulated to greater effort by the prospect of a definite and sufficient period in which to work.

Any scheme of religious education which undervalues the power and personality of the teacher is bound to fail. It is necessary that the student shall master a definite portion of biblical material, but it is far more important that it be presented with such pedagogical accuracy and spiritual insight that it shall master him. This is a heavy demand. It means, first of all, that the teacher shall have mastered, and been mastered by, the truths which he attempts to teach. It means, also, that he shall understand and be able to apply the principles of pedagogy. To secure efficient, thoroughly trained teachers is at once the ambition and the despair of Bible-school leaders. They see the inconsistency of maintaining a school of religion on Sundays conducted by people less alert and capable than the day-school teachers. At the same time they realize that to ask technical training of unsalaried volunteers, busy in other vocations, is little short of demanding "bricks without straw." To their credit be it said that large numbers of these volunteers are willing to gather their own straw in the shape of preparation and thus lead the way out of a perplexing situation. The adoption of graded Bible lessons has proved a valuable sifting process. Some of the weaker, less

persevering teachers have given up in dismay at the amount of hard labor necessary to do the work well. Those, however, who have caught the vision of service, and whose faith in their initial call has not faltered, are toiling over child-study and psychology, seeking to adapt the lessons to each pupil in the class, and, in general, putting their whole heart and a little ginger into their work. Community training schools are being held in many towns of Colorado and other states. These weekly or bi-weekly evening sessions are furnishing valuable assistance to the ambitious teacher who realizes his own lack of preparation. They are, at most, only a temporary expedient. Some method should be devised which would assure a steady supply of expert teachers to every Sunday school. It is urged by many that the granting of salaries would do this. Some experiments of this sort have been made, but there is the ever-present possibility of weakening the motive power.

Special courses of instruction for prospective Bible-school teachers, offered free of charge by their respective denominational colleges, would, I believe, prove more satisfactory. It will be entirely possible for the colleges to do this when they are adjusted to present conditions, and even their staunchest supporters are foreseeing for them either readjustment or extinction.

Failing to receive the patronage of the majority of their own adherents, who prefer the better equipped state institutions, they are largely dependent upon church and individual benefactions. These funds come chiefly from taxpayers who are also helping, indirectly, to sup-

port the public-school system. Surely that is virtually burning the candle at both ends. To demand aid from public funds in maintaining sectarian schools of any sort seems to the average citizen unjust and un-American. Does it not also violate the true American spirit of democracy and equality for any religious body to persist in perpetuating such schools?

Faith, therefore, proposes to remove the barrier between religious boards and school boards by substituting co-operation for competition. This means that adherents of all religious bodies shall intrust the matter of general education to the public schools which they are compelled to support and whose policies they may, as citizens, control if they choose. At the same time, they shall reorganize their private schools to such a degree that they shall be able to produce genuine specialists in religion—pastors, teachers, and leaders in all phases of work. This gives all churches equal and unlimited opportunities of utilizing their thoroughly equipped and vitalized Sunday schools “to permeate the entire educational system with the religious ideal”—one of the aims of the Religious Education Association. These ideals may be distinctly colored by their own individual creeds without violating any law of liberty and fraternity. All aggressive work will be guided by the high principle of service—that the church exists for humanity and not humanity for the church. Realizing, therefore, that humanity can best be won while in the formative stage, the church will mass its strongest forces in the centers of student life. Young men and women,

away from home influence and absorbed in the social and intellectual whirl of high-school or college life, have little time or inclination for matters religious. Ignoring the development of their religious nature during these years means, not only a one-sided culture for themselves, but also a weakening of the spiritual forces of the future. This is especially true in a teachers' college. No young people respond more readily to sympathetic and intelligent efforts to permeate their overcrowded life with high religious ideals and in no other case can gratifying results be so quickly traced.

These facts alone justify our contention for an accredited system of Bible-study, but no system can be trusted to work itself out. There must be back of it human agents willing to push with all their power—yes, with more than their power—watching vigilantly, all the time, for avenues of approach to a human soul.

All teaching must be intensive—doubly charged with power. That such teaching may have both inspirational and cultural influence is demonstrated by the following extracts from real letters, written without solicitation, by former members of one Bible class

"In my work since leaving Greeley I have found as much call for the knowledge

gained in the Bible course as for that of any other subject I studied while in college."

"I am sure I never did learn so much concerning the Bible as I did while with you, and I wish I could fly up there every Sunday."

"Last year in Rocky Ford I taught a class in the Sunday school. My year with you proved invaluable, a treasure house indeed. This year I am on my homestead. Here it is even enhanced; for when lonely it is safe to think only of the best and purest of things."

Another, addressing the present members of the class, says:

"You cannot know how much good your studying in this class will do in the future. I have used the knowledge I gained so much this year."

The writers of these and other letters not quoted are scattered from Wyoming to Arizona. Some of them, young and inexperienced girls, are making brave little adventures, such as starting Sunday schools in remote country school-houses or encouraging the public school and the Sunday school to unite in the arrangement and presentation of a Christmas program. Others are teaching classes in schools previously organized, and all are moved by the same strong impulse to render the Bible as real a power in the lives of others as it has become in their own.